Introduction of ECHS

2860. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have since decided to introduce Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS);

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) in how many cities/towns it would be launched;

(d) by when it is likely to be introduced; and

(e) whether all the servicemen throughout the country would be covered?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (e) The Government have approved introduction of a new medical scheme for providing medical facilities to ex-servicemen, war widows and their dependents on the pattern of CGHS. The details of the scheme are as under:

(i) The military facilities existing at 104 military stations will be augmented at a capital cost of Rs. 49 crores and annual recurring expenditure of Rs. 52 crores.

(ii) Fresh medical facilities in the nature of poly-clinics/medical inspection rooms will be set up at 123 stations where the population of ex-servicemen is more than 2500. This will involve a capital cost of Rs. 69 crores and annual recurring cost of Rs. 98 crores.

(iii) The ex-servicemen, war widows and their dependents at other stations where ex-servicemen population is less than 2500 will be attached to the existing poly-clinics/medical inspection rooms as mentioned in (i) above or with poly-clinics/medical inspection rooms to be created at 123 stations vide (ii) above.

(iv) The ex-servicemen, war widows and their dependents will also be reimbursed the cost of medicines not provided by the poly-clinics/medical inspection rooms, fee of the specialists

to whom they are referred to, the charges of laboratories for pathological or other diagnostic tests and also the cost of hospitalization. This is estimated to cost Rs. 201 crores annually.

(v) The ex-servicemen and war widows will be required to make a contribution at the same rate at which the Central Government pensioners are required to make contribution for availing medical facilities under the CGHS after retirement.

(vi) The scheme will be implemented in a phased manner in five years.

The scheme is contributory in nature. All service personnel on retirement will become members of the scheme on payment of prescribed contribution. Existing ex-servicemen and widows will be eligible to become members on payment of prescribed contribution.

Acquisition of KRIVAK CLASS frigate

2861. SHRI B. J. PANDA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to acquire first KRIVAK CLASS frigate from Russia for the Indian Navy;

(b) if so, what are the special over-riding capabilities of this State of the art Russian frigate; and

(c) whether it is also proposed to acquire an Aircraft carrier, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir. Three ships of modified KRIVAK class are being acquired from Russia for the Indian Navy.

(b) These ships would have state of the art anti-submarine, anti-ship and anti-air capabilities besides latest stealth features.

(c) An Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) has been signed on 4th October, 2000 with the Government of the Russian Federation which, *inter-alia*, provides for the acquisition of 'Admiral Gorshkov', an aircraft